Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health
to the
West-Penwith Rural District Council.

FOR THE YEAR 1925.

J. Coleman Cock, Printer, 1 Market Place, Plymouth.

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GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Annual Report for the year 1925.

The Ministry of Health has again this year asked for an ordinary report.

The Area of the Civil Parishes contained in this District is 41,213 acres of land, 57 acres of water, and 864 acres of foreshore.

The Population in 1921 was 10,543.

The Population in 1924 was 10,460.

The number of inhabited houses, in 1924, 2,787; in 1925, 2,817.

The number of families or separate occupiers, 2,742.

Rateable value, £65,154.

Sum represented by a penny rate £153.

Vital Statistics.

During the year there were 150 births (89 male and 61 female). Of these 5 male and 2 female were illegitimate. The birth-rate was 14·3 per 1,000 per annum, birth-rate per 1,000 of England and Wales 18·3.

The deaths were 115 (52 male and 63 female), giving a death-rate of 10·9 per 1,000 per annum, death-rate for England and Wales 12·2 per 1,000.

There were no deaths from Measles, Enteric Fever, Whooping Cough, Scarlet Fever, or Diphtheria. There was one death from influenza.

Cause of Death.

There were 16 deaths from Cancer, 4 from Cerebral Hæmorrhage, 1 from Influenza, 23 from Heart Disease, 6 from Arterio-Sclerosis, 5 from Bronchitis, 3 from Pneumonia, 8 from Kidney Disease, 1 Suicide, 3 other deaths from violence, and 20 other defined diseases, Tuberculosis 11.

Infantile Mortality.

There were 8 deaths from children under the age of one year, none illegitimate, giving a death-rate of 89·7 per 1,000 births and higher than the death-rate of England and Wales, 75·0.

Five of the above deaths were from Premature Birth and Congenital Debility. There were 2 deaths from Infantile Diarrhœa.

Notifiable Diseases during the year.

	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Diphtheria	1	None	None
Scarlet Fever	11	None	None
Enteric	1	None	None

The infectious disease rate was 1·2 per 1,000 living.

Tuberculosis.

M	F
10	9

Causes of Sickness.

The infectious disease rate per 1,000 being 1·2. Seeing there were only 13 cases of infectious disease notified during the year, the district must be considered to have been very healthy, this being a very low figure. There was one epidemic of Scarlet Fever at St. Erth. There were two deaths from Infantile Diarrhœa.

Nursing Arrangements.

There are no professional Nurses for infectious diseases, no Voluntary workers, no Clinic or Treatment Centres for Tuberculosis or Venereal disease.

There are four District Nurses who also practice Midwifery.

No hospitals provided or subsidised by the Local Authority or by the County Council.

Penzance Infirmary is the centre for Tubercular Treatment. The County Medical Tuberculosis Officer attends weekly. The nearest Venereal Clinic is near Camborne, and for such a scattered district as the West Penwith is, this is the best arrangement.

An infectious disease hospital for the whole of the West Cornwall is required, and this question is frequently debated, but up to the present time no decision has been come to. Again Penzance is the centre for Ambulance facilities, a Motor Ambulance being available for all parts of the district; and is frequently used to convey cases to the West Cornwall Infirmary.

In the event of an outbreak of Small-pox, Tents, or a temporary Hospital of the Dœcker and Ducker type would have to be erected; and as the cases of Small-pox are gradually increasing in Great Britain, the danger of its spreading to Cornwall must not be lost sight of.

Laboratory Work, Etc.

All Pathological and Bacteriological examinations are made at the Pathological Laboratory at Redruth. Diptheric-Anti-toxin is provided by your Council free of charge.

Sanitary Administration.

The infectious disease Prevention Act of 1890, was adopted in 1910.

The Public Health Amendment Acts of 1890 and 1907; neither adopted.

Bye-laws exist with respect to removal of house refuse, cleaning of houses, closets, privies, and cess-pits. Also with respect to slaughter-houses, new streets and buildings.

Arrangements were made for dumping Marazion refuse at Virgin Shaft, and Lelant refuse on the Saltings. The refuse dump at Chennalls for St. Erth Churchtown has been carried into effect and is working satisfactorily.

Cases of overcrowding	2
Remedied	2
Drains defective, 30; choked, 22.	52
Middens badly kept	15
Cess pits overflowing or defective	11
Closets improved, cleansed or removed to more suitable position	6
Earth closets converted into Water Closets	13
Nuisances from refuse disposal	22
,, ,, Dirty Houses	2
,, ,, Overcrowding	2

Other nuisances dealt with were:—From Pig keeping, 5; Fowls, 2; Sewer and Sewer-outfalls, 7.

Nuisances were dealt with after the service of—	Verbal Notice	70
	Written	48
	Statutory	6
Houses disinfected		12
Water supply, works to safeguard		6
,, ,, , to supply where insufficient		2
In the District there are Water Closets		1263
,, ,, ,, Earth Closets		1483
Dwellings without Closets, or sharing with others		70
New closets erected—Earth		14
,, ,, Water In new houses	22	
,, Converted from Earth Closets	13	35

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Slaughter Houses.

There are 14, including one at St. Buryan which is not in use. One at Brane, Sancreed, has been re-opened, which had been closed for some time. In most cases the water used has to be drawn by cart some distance, which is an unsatisfactory arrangement. In some cases the water supply is not sufficient.

Meat Regulations.

Numerous visits of Inspection have been made to the Slaughter Houses. There are twelve in regular use; one is an wholesale business sending considerable meat to distant places.

Occasional Slaughtering.

Notifications in compliance with the regulations received since April have numbered 575, almost entirely respecting pig killing. Pigs are slaughtered usually under six months old, are dairy fed, with separated milk returned from the butter factories, the process includes sterilisation. Large numbers of pigs are sold alive for slaughtering at Bacon Factories and other places out of the District.

The arrangements on farms for slaughtering are usually found unsuitable. Humane killers are not in use, and often the work is done by inexperienced hands and is unnecessarily cruel. The meat inspected has appeared to be excellent; only in four carcases out of about one hundred and thirty examined was there found portions which had to be condemned and destroyed. Notifications have been received from over two hundred farms scattered over the district. In numerous instances insufficient notice is given to permit of inspection being arranged for. Many notices refer to the same day and time, such as noon on Wednesdays; the carcases being removed early in the same afternoon. The above and other reasons make it only possible to partially carry into effect the objects of the Regulations. There is, however, evidence of beneficial results in some respects.

Dairies.

There are 60 carrying on as retail purveyors of milk, and 20 as wholesale. Numerous inspections have been made of the premises occupied, and in most cases have been found in good condition. In several cases lack of cleansing and lime washing was dealt with, and 3 unsuitable cowsheds condemned; one of which is reconstructed and the other two arranged for. Water supply improved or protected in five cases.

Arrangements for Disinfection.

After all cases of disease of an infectious nature the rooms are disinfected by aid of a Formalin lamp and spray and disinfectants freely used. There is no steam disinfecter in the District.

Inspection of places where Food is prepared.

There is one Bakehouse, which is frequently inspected and in good sanitary condition. There are four wholesale Butter and Cream factories, and one Margarine factory, which have been visited and found in good order. Frequent visits have also been made to farm places where butter and cream are prepared. In a few cases the sanitary arrangements were insufficient, and improvements were effected.

The Sale of Food and Drugs Act is now controlled by the Police.

There are no special Milk and Cream regulations.

No action has been required for smoke abatement.

Factories and Workshops.

Number of workshops on the register, 70.

Water Supplies.

The water supply at Polgigga, St. Levan, has been protected.

At Churchtown, St. Erth, a new pump has been fixed, and the well enclosed and covered.

Sewerage.

Sewer outfalls dealt with during the year:—Sennen Cove, repaired; Marazion eastern outfall renewed, cost £500.

The sewers at Gulval are a constant source of trouble. Renewals are necessary.

Sanitary Inspection of the District.

During the year various areas have been visited. The two most important areas that at the present time require attention are Carbis Bay and Sennen Cove, because of the fact that they are both growing summer resorts.

CARBIS BAY.—No advance to report on improvements in Sanitation and Water Supply.

Refuse disposal is calling for the need of house to house collection and provision of a suitable place of disposal.

SENNEN COVE.—A scheme for sewerage and water supply has been prepared and is now under consideration.

The water supply of St. Buryan is still satisfactory and no complaints have been received.

Attention was directed in last year's report to the dumping of refuse in various parts of your District from Penzance Borough. Owing to paper being blown in all directions and the attraction these dumps have for vermin and flies, this practice of dumping in your District is most unsatisfactory, and some remedy of this state of affairs should be sought. This state of things still continues.

Public Health Staff.

There is a certificated full-time Sanitary Inspector and a part-time Medical Officer. Half the salary in each case is paid by the Ministry of Health.

Housing.

Number of new houses erected during the year	30
As part of a Municipal housing scheme	None
Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects	90
Number of houses inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	60
Number found to be so dangerous as to be unfit for human habitation	None
Number found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for habitation	60
Number rendered fit in consequence of informal action by Local Authority or their Officer	54

Houses Erected 1925.

5 Rooms and under	18
6, 7 & 8 Rooms	9
9 & 11 Rooms	3
Total	30

Built of	
Concrete	14
Stone	4
Brick	4
Wood	8
Total	30

Action under Statutory powers.

(a) No houses, built under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919.

(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:—

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 14

(2) Number in which defects were remedied:—

(a) By owners 7

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours respectfully,

W. J. PARAMORE, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., DEPUTY M.O.H.